

Bill prohibits DOL from enacting stricter farm youth labor laws

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FEEDSTUFFS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The House of Representatives approved H.R. 4157, the Preserving America's Family Farms Act, a bill to prohibit the Department of Labor from moving forward on an earlier proposed rule that would limit the ability of children to work on family farms unless it was for their parents.

In comments on the House floor, Rep. Tim Wahlen (R., Minn.) stated that even though the administration has said it does not plan to pursue the rule, this legislation "verifies" that the Labor Department cannot move the rule forward or a similar rule.

Many House members voiced support for the bill and shared experiences of growing up and working on a farm and the important values instilled in farm children.

Rep. Richard Hanna (R., N.Y.) said he spent many summers working on his grandparents' dairy farm and learned personal responsibility as well as pride and dignity that results in a day's work. He also shared his family's farm may not have been economically viable without the help of children during harvest and milking.

"Lessons learned on a family farm should be encouraged more, not less," he said. In his time as an employer, he's found that those who worked early and hard in their lives were his most eager and responsible employees. "We should not restrict young people. Character built early grows deeper and lasts a lifetime."

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